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THE ART

OF

WOOD CARVING.

Practical Hints to Amateurs,

AND

A SHORT HISTORY OF THE ART.

BY

GEORGE ALFRED ROGERS,

Artist in Wood to the Queen, and Professor at the Crystal Palace Schools of Art; author of "Some Account of the Wood Carvings of St. Michael's Church, Cornhill."

"So much the more our carver's excellence."—*Winter's Tale.*

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DEDICATION.

I BEG to dedicate this Work, with much respect, to those Ladies and Gentlemen whom I have had the honour of instructing in my profession.

33, MADDOX STREET.

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PREFACE.

It is my desire, in these few pages, to render what assistance I am able to those numerous ladies and gentlemen who have made a study of my profession their amusement.

I cannot hope that this Work will be all that is needed, but such instruction as it is possible to give with only pen and ink will, I trust, be found within its pages.

With the exception of illuminating, and perhaps a few sister arts, wood sculpture or carving appears to be the most useful and entertaining recreation which has for some years been admitted into fashionable circles.

Many of my pupils have by their endeavours largely contributed to the success of fancy fairs for various charities in which they have been interested; others have decorated their tables with caskets and bookstands, and their walls with brackets and frames; and I must not omit the mention of one lady who has accomplished the remarkable task of carving all the oaken pew-heads or finials for

her husband's church, with very little assistance from me, on the actual blocks of wood, I merely supplying the designs and models, and carving one or two with her in softer material.

Again expressing a hope that this little Work will assist those who have commenced, and act as an inducement to others to try their skill, I beg to introduce the following pages.

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PRACTICAL HINTS TO AMATEURS.

Requisites and Useful Accessories.

In commencing the study of wood-carving it will be well to see that the necessary implements and materials are at our hand; I will, therefore, give in this section a list and description of the various items we shall require in the course of our work.

Firstly, we must have a bench or strong table for our operations; it need not be very large, but should be as firm as we can make it: if it is not of sufficient weight in itself to keep it steady, I recommend its being placed against a wall, or, if possible, fastened to it. This bench should have a hole about half an inch in diameter cut through the top, four inches from the front centre. The importance of having the work-table firm will be at once seen as soon as the amateur commences his work. A substitute for a bench, which answers tolerably well for light work, is to have the carving fixed to a board, and that attached to an ordinary table by means of small iron cramps.

We shall require about ten or twelve tools, ground and sharpened to a fine edge. I give illustrations of the most useful of these instruments: their technical terms are as follow:—

1. Half-inch flat tool.
2. Quarter-inch flat tool.
3. An eighth flat tool.
4. Half-inch gouge.
5. Quarter-inch gouge.
6. Backbend.
7. A parting or V tool.
8. A half-inch firmer.
9. A corner firmer.
10. A quarter-inch grounder.
11. A pick.
12. A maccaroni tool.

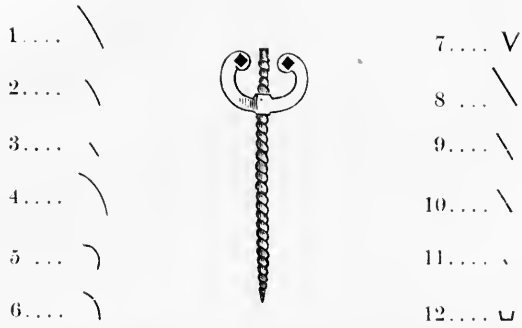
I cannot recommend the short-handled "ladies' tools," as they are termed, the best size for a carving tool being about five inches of handle, and four or four and a half of steel.

We shall also require a "carver's screw" for the bench, a small mallet, and the wood to be carved, and we are ready. The mallet is not always needed, but it is useful in getting the unnecessary wood away when we are commencing the work.

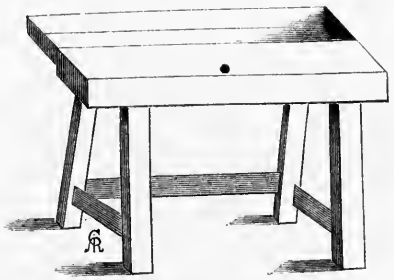
The above articles are absolutely necessary for carrying out our designs with success.

I will now give a further list of articles which, though they can be dispensed with, at any rate at first, are nevertheless important and useful additions to the carver's studio.

A Bench-vice.—This vice is to be fixed at one corner of the work-table (the left side will be the most out of the way),



IMPRESSIONS OF TOOLS MENTIONED ON PAGE 2.



CARVER'S BENCH-SCREW AND WORK-TABLE.

and will be found very useful for holding the wood while being prepared for carving.

A bow-saw or a buhl-saw and horse: the former carries a coarse saw, and is used in a horizontal position, the wood being held in the vice. Both hands should grasp the longest handle, the operator standing right in front of his work. When the interior portions of the wood have to be sawn out with the bow-saw, a hole must be made with a gimlet or other tool, and the stretcher at the top loosed, and one rivet holding the saw taken out; the saw is then put through the gimlet-hole, the rivet replaced, and the saw restretched. This saw is much more rapid in execution, but cannot do such fine work as the buhl-saw. A description of the manner of using this latter instrument will be found in the section on "Fretwork and Perforated Carving." Two or three small files and gimlets, a screw-driver, glue-pot, and compasses, a few more tools of various curves and bends, a pair of small handscrews, and some glass-paper.

On the Choice of Woods.

It will facilitate the progress of the amateur materially if wood of a suitable nature be used to carry out his intention. With regard to this no laws can be laid down; a few instances, however, of woods which are especially applicable may be of service.

Thus, lime wood was almost exclusively used by Grinling Gibbons for all his magnificent drops and festoons of fruit, flowers, and birds at Petworth, Chatsworth, Burghley, Belton, Melbury, Gatton, and the numerous other noble seats to which his genius has imparted such a charm.

Lime-tree is soft and pliable to the tool, and less liable to split and splinter than almost any other wood, which qualities render it of great utility to carvers for carrying out designs when lightness and boldness are equally required. It takes a stain well, and a fair polish, or it may be varnished without greatly altering the colour of the wood, but giving to it a very agreeable boxwood appearance. As well as for large festoons, it is suitable for smaller works, such as book-stands, miniature and portrait frames, &c.*

American walnut is a very good wood for amateurs, and is much in favour with them from its dark colour. It has, however, a more open grain than lime, and therefore requires more care to avoid accidents. It is used for many small works where much projection is unnecessary, as book-racks, letter-boxes, watch-stands, &c.

Sycamore, holly, and chestnut are amongst the lightest of our woods: the first is greatly, and, in fact, principally used for bread plates and potato bowls and other articles, when a light tint is a consideration.

When the amateur has gained a certain proficiency in the art, harder woods may be worked without a great amount of additional exertion, as so much depends on the mode of propelling the implements.

I should then recommend English oak, Italian and English walnut. The former, from its hard and enduring nature, should as a rule be chosen for executing the finials or

* Lime wood has been famous for purposes of sculpture from very ancient times, and is mentioned with praise by more than one classic poet. It is extensively grown in this country, though practically it must be reckoned a foreign tree, principally growing in the north and east of Europe, and in Lithuania, where there are enormous forests of it.

pew-heads, alms-boxes, church and Gothic work in general. It is also much used for clock and hall brackets, and for other pieces of solid furniture.* Italian walnut is a rich and beautiful wood for a variety of purposes, such as cabinets, panels, bookcases, frames, &c. It is hard, but the effect produced by its use amply repays the extra labour caused by the close texture of the material.

When any very delicate designs have to be executed, and the most minute finish is required, boxwood, ebony, or any other equally hard and close-grained woods are decidedly the best to choose.

Pear-tree is a pleasant wood for working, and a good piece resembles lime in its pliability. It is extensively used in France for the same purposes for which we employ lime.

Woods with ornamental grains, as bird's-eye maple, satin wood, yew, and laburnum, &c., are not the most desirable woods for carving purposes: the grain and colour often interfere with the effect we are endeavouring to produce. Thus one of the eyes of the maple might grace the nose of a Venus, or the white stains of yew or laburnum show like deep gashes across her otherwise lovely face.

These are only general ideas, as there must be of necessity many exceptions to any rule for the selection of proper woods for particular subjects; for the choice of material must in all cases be subservient to the character of the design, as also to the taste of the operator.

To procure good wood for our purposes the trees should be felled at a proper time and age, and the wood should be thoroughly seasoned. The proper time to fell oaks and most

* The wood principally used in the decorative carving of our cathedrals during the middle ages was the true British oak, or *Quercus robur*.

other trees is when they fail to increase in size more than two feet per annum. If cut down before that period of their existence, the heart will not be fully developed, and will not be as hard as the other part. When oaks are about thirty years old their growth is most rapid. Autumn is generally considered the best time to fell.

If wood be used in an unseasoned state it is sure to warp and twist; and when it is so used for panels fitted into loose grooves, it shrinks away from the edge which happens to be the most slightly held; but when restrained by nails, mortises, or other unyielding attachments, which do not allow them the power of contraction, they split with irresistible force, and the material and the workmanship are thus brought to no useful service. It is, therefore, very necessary that the natural juices of the tree be got rid of by seasoning it before use. After a tree has been lopped, barked, and roughly squared, it is left some time exposed to the weather, and may be soaked in fresh running water with advantage, or boiled or steamed. Any of these processes tend to dilute and wash out the juices, and the water readily evaporates from the wood at a subsequent period, and the colour of the wood will be much improved by these means.

In this way fir timber, on its arrival at the port of London, is formed into rafts or floats on the Thames, and allowed to remain there for some time. When taken out it is left to dry thoroughly before its removal to the sawpits. Thin planks, if properly exposed to the air, will be seasoned in about a year, but the thicker the wood the longer the time it will take. Oak loses nearly two-fifths of its weight in proper seasoning.

TABLE SHOWING THE VARIOUS PROPERTIES OF WOODS.

Elasticity.

Ash.
Hazel.
Hickory.
Lance Wood.
Sweet Chestnut.
Snake Wood.
Yew.

Toughness.

Beech.
Elm.
Lignum Vitæ.
Oak.
Walnut.

Evenness of Grain.

Lime.
Pear-tree.
Pine.

Handsome Figure.

Bird's-eye Maple.
Italian Walnut.
Yew.
Oak.
Mahogany.
Laburnum.
Tulip.
Satin Wood.

Durability.

Cedar.
Oak.
Poplar.
Sweet Chestnut.
Yellow Deal.

Colouring Matter.

RED.

Brazil.
Cane Wood.
Logwood.
Red Sanders.

GREEN.

Green Ebony.

YELLOW.

Fustic.
Zante.

Scent.

Camphor Wood.
Cedar.
Rosewood.
Sandal Wood.
Satin Wood.
Sassafras.

On Fixing the Work.

This is a more important operation than many amateurs seem to think. It is alike necessary for doing work well, and for doing it without accidents to either the work in hand or the fingers of the carver. I may here add that if the work be properly fixed, and tools held as hereinafter described, accidents are almost impossible.

There are very numerous methods of fixing the work on the bench or work-table, the best by far, and the most general, being the "carver's screw."

This useful instrument has at one end a pointed screw, and at the other a nut. The worm of the screw is turned square to give extra power. The way to use it is as follows:—Bore a hole in the back of the wood required to be fixed with a gimlet or small tool. The nut of the screw is then taken off, and the point turned in to the gimlet-hole until it holds the wood firmly. The hole must not be bored too deeply, or it will interfere with the carving. The two square holes in the nut are to be used as keys, similar to bedscrews, for turning the carver's screw into the work.

This done, the nut end of the screw is to be put through the hole in the bench-top, and the nut screwed on underneath until all is made firm and secure.

The "carver's screw" has advantages over every other kind of fastening, inasmuch as it is all underneath the table, and no part of the fixing is in the way of the carver. Another advantage is, that the work can be turned with the greatest facility by merely loosening the nut, and can immediately be made firm again in another position.

As other means of fixture, two iron cramps are often used on either side of the work to hold it securely, but they are much in the way, and the carver feels cramped for room. They are, however, useful when the amateur is working on a table through which a hole cannot or may not be cut.

Holdfasts are used sometimes, but they require a large hole in the bench, and are only applicable to large and heavy work. The same objection of its being in the way applies to the holdfast; and, indeed, to all the other appliances which

IVY PAPER-WEIGHT.

have been invented. There are exceptions to every rule and it sometimes occurs that the "carver's screw" is not adapted to the work in hand, and some of the other means are obliged to be made use of; as, for instance, when a hole cannot be made in the work, and the work cannot be glued down on a board, and in the case of a chair leg, or banner-screen pole, in which cases the pole or leg is put into a long cramp, and the cramp placed on the bench. The carving will then turn round horizontally when needed. The cramp must be fixed firmly, which is generally done by two blocks of wood, with grooves cut to receive its two ends.

Small frames and other work are very often glued down on a common piece of deal during the operation of carving, and care must always be taken, when this plan is pursued, to place a piece of paper between the wood to be carved and the deal, so that the two woods can be separated safely when the work is done. Unless this precaution be taken, the carving cannot be removed from the board without breaking. The paper splits when a dinner knife is pressed into the joints, and one-half of it will adhere to the carving, the other to the board.

On First Steps, and Carving in Relief.

In commencing operations I advise the choice of something simple, and that it should be carved in relief; thus a small paper-weight in lime wood would be easy and suitable for a first trial. (See Plate II.)

Procure a piece of lime about an inch or three-quarters of an inch in thickness, and of the oval shape of the pattern. (The amateur can saw it out himself, if he thinks fit, with a bow or buhl saw.) Now make a tracing of the design, and gum or paste it on the wood. The "carver's screw" is now

to be fastened in the bottom of the wood, and to the bench, as described on page 8, taking care that the hole for the screw is in such a place that it will not protrude through the surface of the work. It is well to put it under the part where there will be the most projection, and not to force it in to too great a depth if the lime is not glued down on a piece of wood, in which case the screw can be put in anywhere.

The first thing now to do is the "grounding;" that is, cutting away all the wood, except where the leaves and stalks and berries are to be, to an even depth, leaving the design the full thickness of the wood. This is done by taking flat tool No. 2 on Plate I, and wherever it fits the outline of the leaves or stalks, hold it quite perpendicularly just outside the line, and propel it by gentle taps of the mallet. The tool must not point inwards, so as to undercut the leaves, on any account. If it is not held quite upright, the inclination had better be outwards than the reverse. Now take flat tool No. 3, and gouge No. 4, and when they fit, proceed in the same manner until the entire outline is incised. No. 2 tool must now be taken to cut away the wood outside the design to the depth of the incisions made, getting the ground all level and even with the aid of tools 10 and 11. The whole of this operation may have to be repeated two or three times, until the desired depth, and consequently the desired projection of design, is acquired. In the instance before us the ground should be sunk to a little more than half the thickness of the wood. It is well to draw a line round the edge of the work to assist the eye in getting the level for the grounding.

Except when the mallet is being used, the tools should be

held with *both hands*, the left hand grasping the tool a little below the middle, and the palm of the right hand at the top of the handle. The left wrist may rest on the work, or on the bench, for steadiness, and act as the support of the instrument, the right hand being the guide and propeller.

If attention be paid to this advice, and the tools be always held as described, accidents to the hands cannot possibly occur, from the sound reason that if the amateur have both his hands on the tools, he can have no other hand to cut.

We now come to the more interesting part of our occupation, that of the formation of the leaves and berries. One leaf is represented as being under the stalk, another over it, and the berries quite separate. It would be well to leave a part of each leaf to the full thickness of the wood, and break their horizontal as much as the taste of the operator dictates, so as to give to the surface a natural undulation. The stalk, as will be seen, must not be the same height all along, but should dip gracefully under and over the leaves. This part of the work is technically termed *bosting*.*

When the stalk and leaves have been bosted into the agreeable curves they assume in nature, the surface must be got as smooth as possible with the tools, and the outlines corrected (should they require it), and the whole slightly undercut, so that the thickness of the wood is not so apparent; but this is generally overdone by amateurs. There is no necessity in most works for undercutting more than 60 degrees.

* There is no correctly-authorised word in English to denote this preparatory state of carving: it corresponds with what is familiarly understood by a *dead colour* in painting. The origin of this term was probably the Italian word *abbozzo*.

Supposing the surface of the leaves to have been carved as smoothly as the skill of the amateur will permit, the veining may be put in. It is best to draw the midrib or centre vein, and to carve that one first, and let it be raised, not an incised vein. Mark the two lines from the stalk, gradually verging together, until they quite meet at the top point of the leaf. Now take the maccaroni and cut away the wood on either side of the vein, tilting the instrument slightly towards the stalk, in order that no mark be made with the other corner of the tool. As this requires some little practice, it would be well to make acquaintance with this tool by trying it on another piece of waste wood. Those amateurs who have not this instrument—and many have not—should use the parting tool, No. 7, Plate I., in the same manner as the maccaroni, but in this case a small flat tool must be used after it, to cut away the wood close to the vein. The maccaroni does not require this assistance, as it is shaped to cut at both angles.

The side veins I should advise to be merely incised or engraved at present, until some proficiency is attained in handling the tools. This can be done with tool 7, the veining or parting tool.

The edge of the oval may now be rounded off with the flat tools. In doing this the amateur must be cautious that the grain does not carry his tool too far into the wood ; if it has a tendency to do so he may be pretty sure he is cutting the wrong way, and must try in the opposite direction. This will give the amateur some experience, and get him used to the grain of woods, as he will have to cut in four different directions to round this edge properly—namely, from the middle of the two sides to the two ends. Now take some fine glass-

PANEL FOR MOTTO OR INSCRIPTION.

paper (No. 0), and rub it lightly over the surface of the work, but be careful not to injure the leaves by destroying the sharpness of the edges, or it will look heavy, and present a clumsy appearance. The carving of the paper-weight may now be considered finished, but more can be done to it if the carver wishes,—such as the ground being punched, the whole being stained, varnished, and polished (see section on this subject on page 21). A hole can be cut in the bottom for the reception of a piece of lead, and then covered with velvet, or it may be mounted on an oblong slab of ebony, or a larger oval of the same wood. If the amateur has succeeded tolerably well with this first trial, some other piece of a more difficult character and more elaborate design had better be attempted, such as the design on Plate III. This is a small oblong panel which, when finished, could be applied to a variety of uses, such as the front of a letter-box for the hall or study, the front of a small drawer, or one of the panels of a small cabinet; or, as it was originally designed and executed for her Majesty, in the form of a bookstand. These designs have to be enlarged to the size suitable to the object in view, or full-sized copies can be had of the author. I advise the amateur still to keep to lime or American walnut wood until he has made some progress, and has got used to the handling of the instruments.

When the full-sized drawing is made or procured, a tracing of it has to be gummed on to the wood to be used, and the work proceeded with in the same manner as in the first trial, the only difference being the requisition of more tools for the incised cuts, or, as it is technically termed, the "setting in."

On the scroll should be carved, in raised letters, a motto, name, or the word "letters," according to the purposes for

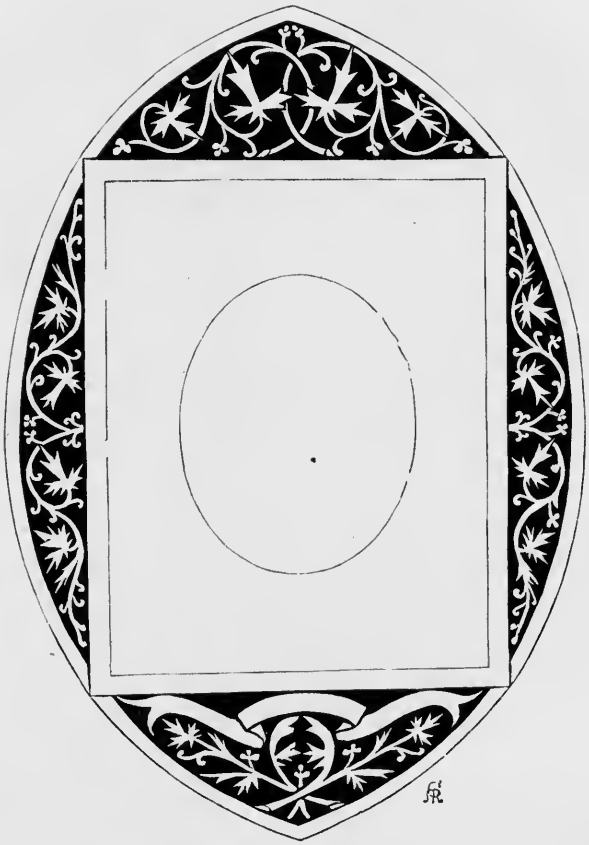
which the panel is intended. This lettering is done the last thing, after the scroll has been carved and made quite smooth. It is of great importance that no glass-paper should on any account be used until all the carving is done, or it will take the edge off the tools, and lead to considerable trouble in getting them again to work well. As some of the instruments are very difficult to sharpen, great care should therefore be taken to keep them in order.

On Fret-cutting and Perforated Carving.

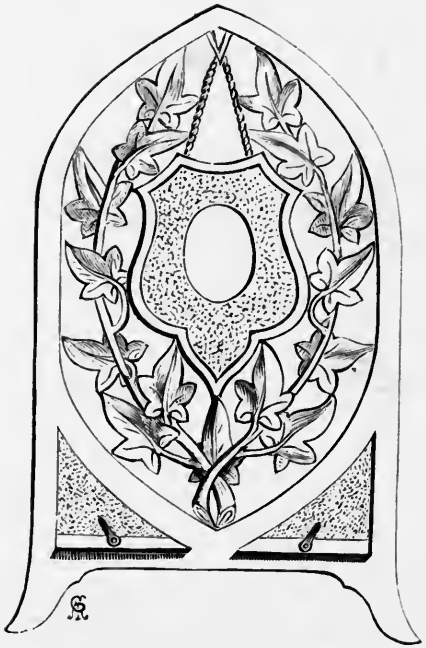
Perforated carving is accomplished with the assistance of a bow or buhl saw, and is a quick and easy way of gaining a rich effect.

There is a large number of ladies who use the buhl-saw very skilfully; but I feel certain that when they see the vast improvement to their works which they can give by employing carving tools, they will add to their other accomplishments that of enriching their productions with an artistic use of our implements.

Fretwork is produced in the following manner: — A horse, which is a piece of wood cut out in the form of a boot-jack, with a screw to fasten it to the table, the two prongs projecting over the table; the wood to be worked is laid on this horse (the pattern having been previously marked on it), and the saw worked in a perpendicular manner, the right hand grasping the handle underneath the horse, and working up and down between the two prongs, the left hand being laid on the fretwork to guide it according to the lines to be sawn. When the outside is done, holes must be bored with a gimlet or an Archimedean screw in the places to be taken out of the interior, and the saw loosened at the top, put



FRAME FOR FRET-CUTTING AND CARVING.



BOOK-STAND AND PORTRAIT-FRAME IN ONE.

through the hole, and refastened, and so on until all the pieces to come out of the centre are fretted. The first example I give will look very pretty (Plate IV.), even if no carving is added; the second it is more necessary to enrich with the tools, and when worked, forms a pretty bookstand and portrait-frame in one (Plate V.). The wood for the former should be from a quarter to half an inch in thickness, and the latter from half an inch to five-eighths of an inch. The mode of procedure is as follows:—Firstly, the design must be enlarged to the size required (say about 18 inches by 12). The outline and the pieces to come out of the centre must now be sawn out in the way described above. When that is done, the perforated wood is secured to the work-table by a piece of wood three or four inches long being fixed to the carver's screw, as if it were going to be carved; the nut end is then put through one of the holes in the work, then through the hole in the bench, and the nut screwed on underneath. The piece of wood thus employed is called a bridge, the use of which prevents the necessity of making a screw-hole in the work in hand. But this can only be done in perforated carving. We have in this class of work no "grounding" to do. The description in a former section will give an insight into the manner of finishing the work, and producing a natural effect.

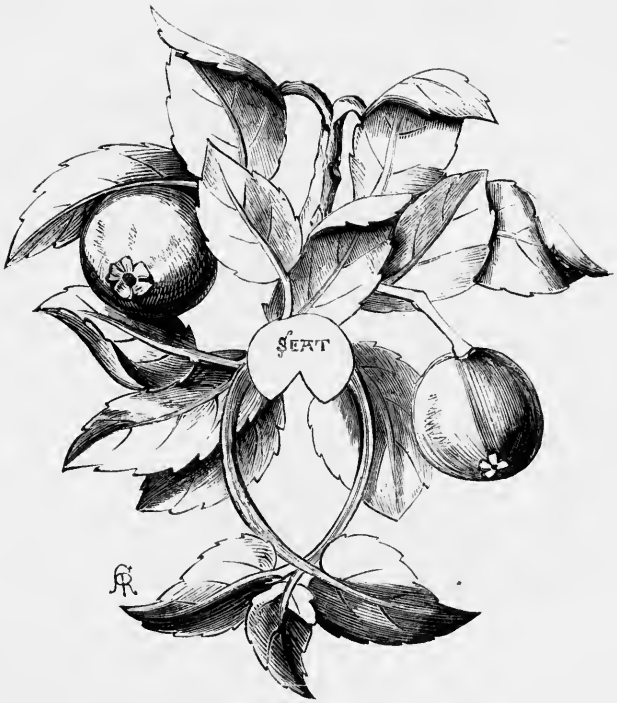
On Bold Carving, and Carving in the Round or Solid.

This is the most difficult and the most important branch of wood-carving or sculpture; and, in fact, I think it is the only class of carving that merits the latter term. It occupies more time in execution, and requires considerably more practice and more taste.

Let us for a moment look at a piece of Grinling Gibbons's carving. It is probably an arrangement of bouquets of fruit and flowers tied together with graceful folds of ribbon, which, with festoons of flowers branching out of cornucopia, form the bordering of a handsome mirror. This is sure to be bold and daring work, producing a grand effect. The carving has probably in some parts a projection of eight or ten inches, so arranged that, though the masses are to a certain extent uniform, yet they appear to have become so by accident. Now this is not, as some would think, executed in the solid, but probably in three, certainly in two, layers of wood, carved separately, and mounted one on another in such a dexterous manner that the junction is quite unobservable. Nearly all the works of this eminent carver are mounted in this manner; and if the amateur wishes to carry out any works in this style, he will certainly receive pleasure, emulation, and instruction by studying the works of Grinling Gibbons at any of the palaces, mansions, or churches which are fortunate enough to possess some of his handiwork.

We had better commence by carving one of the smaller mounts,—say, for instance, a branch of apple-tree, with leaves and fruit, about two inches or two inches and a half in thickness. To study directly from nature is undoubtedly the safest way of representing her correctly; it is, nevertheless, attended with considerable difficulty in this and many other instances, to an unpractised amateur. I should, therefore, advise the pupil to copy a carved mount before he attempts the light, airy, and graceful designs of nature herself; for the experienced carver will translate, as it were, the design to the amateur by his judgment without losing its characteristics, but merely arranging it in such a manner

BRANCH OF APPLE-TREE, FOR CARVING IN THE ROUND.



GROUND CARVING FOR MOUNT, ENGRAVED ON PLATE VI.

as will make it possible to render its representation in wood practicable and effective. In fact, it is sometimes necessary to exaggerate forms to counterbalance the want of colour in our material.

This study must be sawn out with a bow-saw to the outline, the wood being held in the vice (the buhl-saw is far too delicate for wood of such thickness). The bosting must now be commenced, regard being paid to advice in a former section, and carrying it out in such a way that the thickness of wood is made good use of without showing the sides too obtrusively.

This will form a good piece of practice for doing something on rather a grand scale, and those who have succeeded with it sufficiently well to encourage them to proceed in this direction, might now attempt a floral boss in the style of Grinling Gibbons. The branch of apple-tree which we have just finished will form the mount. The place on which it is to be fitted is called a seat. The ground part of this work should be carved all over, showing little or no wood unused, as explained by Plate VII. The seat should be a circular pedestal, about one inch and a quarter in diameter, left to the full thickness of the wood, in the place just underneath the mount. The sides should be carved, to give as good an appearance as the design will allow. When finished, I should advise it to be varnished and white polished. It could be made use of for many purposes, as, for instance, a bracket, in which case a top for it should be turned in walnut wood, and polished in the same manner. This will be found to give a pleasant contrast.

In carving bold works such as the above, it is very useful to have some clay or modelling wax, and before cutting the

wood, to model the design with modelling tools. By this means the amateur will be better able to determine the best way to lay down the leaves and flowers.

I hope and think I have given such hints in the various branches of the art, and shown their peculiar treatment, as will enable the amateur to carry out any works he may wish, provided the requisite practice is given; and I also hope that, with my hints and their patience, many beautiful works of art may be added to their treasures.

On Sharpening the Tools and keeping them in Order, and other Information.

When carving tools are first purchased they have generally neither been ground nor sharpened, unless especially ordered, or bought of a carver, in which cases they will be ready for use. It is nevertheless useful for the amateur to be independent, and to know how to grind, sharpen, and set his tools himself.

Nearly every tool requires a separate and different treatment to sharpen, as their points or blades differ materially.

Firstly, then, they must all be ground on a grindstone well wetted with water; thus, Nos. 1, 2, and 3 are ground on their convex side, at an angle of 23 degrees, turning them slightly all the while, so as to grind them evenly. When they are brought to a nice edge others may be taken up, as Nos. 4 and 5: the same method applies to these, except that they will require a little more turning round, as they are more curved. No. 6 is ground only on its concave side. No. 7, the parting tool, requires great care in grinding; the two outside flat parts must be ground, but the difficulty is to

do exactly as much to one side as to the other. No. 8 has to be ground on both sides. No. 9 also, but it must be held in a slanting position. No. 10 must be ground on its lower side. No. 11 the same; but it requires the merest touch on the grindstone. No. 12 is the most difficult: it requires grinding on its three outer sides, all exactly equal with each other.

The twelve tools now ground have to be sharpened on the oilstones in this manner:—The tools are held firmly in the left hand, and the Turkey or Arkansas is rubbed on them with the right hand, the stones being wetted with sweet oil. The Arkansas stones are used for the more delicate of the instruments; the others may be rubbed with the Turkey. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, are rubbed on their concave side with the round edge of the Turkey stone, and afterwards rubbed on the convex side with the flat part of the stone. No. 6 is only rubbed on its concave side. No. 7 is to be rubbed with the flat side of the Arkansas stone on its two outer edges. Nos. 8 and 9 require to be rubbed with the flat side of the Turkey stone on both their sides; Nos. 10 and 11 to be rubbed with flat side of Turkey stone on the lower side only; and No. 12 to be very carefully rubbed on its three outer sides with the Arkansas stone.

The tools have now to be strapped; *i.e.*, drawn over a piece of buff leather with some sharpening paste made of emery and putty-powder dust on it, similar to a razor strap. Supposing the above to have been carried out properly, the tools are now ready for use. Practice is required to know when they are sufficiently ground and ready for the oilstones.

The tools should not be allowed to knock one against

another, left in the damp, or used for improper purposes, or they will soon get out of order; but they should be kept carefully apart, and occasionally applied to the leather strap: they will then remain sharp for a considerable time. The most difficult tools to set, such as the maccaroni and parting tools, it would be well to keep in scissor sheaths.

In carving frames it is safest to form the rebate first, as it is dangerous to do it after the carving is executed. The rebate is at the back of the frame, and is the groove in which the glass and picture rest. It should be done evenly all round, or the chances are that the glass will break when pressed in with the backboards.

It is always useful to have a little glue ready to your hand, as accidents will happen with the best regulated instruments. It is made thus:—Break the glue up into pieces about the size of shillings, put it into the glue-pot, pour water on it so as just to cover it, half fill the outer vessel with water, and boil the whole until the glue is quite melted. There must always be water in the outer kettle, or the glue will burn. Salisbury glue is the best for amateurs to use, as its light colour will render the joints less observable. It must be used quite hot. In winter we often warm the wood, in order to prevent the glue from chilling while being used. When straight joints have to be glued, they must be made perfectly level; both pieces must be brushed over with glue, and the two pieces rubbed together with some strength, in order to press the surplus glue from out of the joint, and then put on one side to dry. When a leaf or small piece of carving is broken off, it is merely glued and pressed on, and held for a few minutes, or tied on with string, or fixed in its place

with some other means; it is only in straight joints that it is necessary to rub the two pieces of wood together.

Warping is a frequent cause of annoyance to amateurs, and unless they know how to remedy it, they are often obliged to throw aside as useless the work of many days, or else, in trying to cure, increase the disease.

Warping is caused by allowing new, unseasoned wood (or, as it is technically termed, "green wood") to dry on one side more rapidly than the reverse side. It should be turned often to avoid this, and should not be used until it is well seasoned. It is also caused by exposing wood to heat or to damp, in which case it is almost sure to curl and shrink.

The way to remedy this is very simple, but requires careful watching. The concave side of the warped wood is to be placed over a damp towel or cloth, and some weight, not heavy enough to break the wood, laid on it; or the convex side may be subjected to some warmth—placed, perhaps, three feet from an ordinary fire. In either of these methods a careful watch must be kept, or the wood may be overshot—that is, drawn too far—and take a warp in the opposite direction.

On Staining, Oiling, Varnishing, and Polishing Wood Carving.

Amateurs generally content themselves by merely executing the carving or art part of their works, and having them fitted up and finished by professional hands; but there are some who are so far independent as to like to carry out their designs entirely themselves from their commencement to the finish. I think it will therefore not be out of character

with the objects of this little Work to give some advice relating to staining, varnishing, and polishing wood-carvings.

Walnut stain (made without oil) is in very general use for lime and other light woods; it can be diluted with water to any tint required, and should be put on the carving with a brush or small camel-hair pencil. This should be commenced and finished without leaving off, and the same place should not be gone over twice if possible, or the result will be that lines or streaks will appear, or that one place will be of a darker shade than the rest. When diluted, it is best to try it on a waste piece of wood before using it on the carving, to test the strength of the stain, and also to dilute sufficient for the work in hand at first. This stain is used also for giving a deeper shade to light walnut wood; but this wood is generally of so rich a colour as not to require it.

Bichromate of potash is in great use for staining oak and other woods of that character, but it does not do well for softer woods. It can (like the former) be diluted with water, and applied in the same manner, only it should not be allowed to stain the hands, as it is very difficult to get off.

Boxwood requires another process altogether. It has to be washed quickly over with the strongest aqua-fortis that can be had, and when it is of a rich colour, rather darker than required, it should be plunged into a basin of cold water to stop the action. This operation should not take many minutes. When dry, brush it over with a stiff brush.

When oak or walnut wood is not required to be stained, and the plain material gives it an unfinished appearance, oiling with linseed oil produces a good effect. It takes two or three days to dry thoroughly, when it should be rubbed over

with a stiff bristle brush, if the carving is strong enough to allow of its being applied freely.

There are very numerous varnishes in use, but the most useful for the purposes of amateur wood-carvers are white hard varnish, brown hard varnish, and pale hard varnish. The former is used for light woods, the second for dark woods, and the last for medium-tinted woods. The varnishes are to be applied with camel-hair brushes as smoothly as possible, as if the work were being delicately painted all over, not as though it were being washed. It must also be laid on as thinly as can be, and two or three coats will be required, as the first will sink into the grain of the wood, time being allowed for drying between each coat. It is best to pour out a small quantity (a table-spoonful or so) into a glass or cup, so as not to use it from the bottle, which should be kept closed. The varnish not used can be returned to the bottle, and the brush washed in spirits of wine, and kept for this purpose. If the varnish looks somewhat rough, as it probably will do, it can be smoothed down with a little polish, or after the second coat of varnish the work may be lightly glass-papered once more. No. 0 paper which has been rather worn out is the best for this purpose.

Polishing is not the pleasantest occupation, but as it adds considerably to the effect of certain works, probably some of my readers may like to know the process. White or transparent polish is used for light, and French polish for dark or stained woods.

The *modus operandi* is as follows. Take a small piece of wadding, soft and pliable, and pour a few drops of either polish upon it according to the colour of the wood. Now wrap the wetted wadding up in a piece of old linen, forming

it into a pad; hold the pad by the surplus linen; touch the pad with one or two drops of linseed oil. Now pass the pad gently over the parts to be polished, working it round in small circles, occasionally re-wetting the wadding with polish, and the pad with a drop or so of oil. The object of the oil is merely to cause the pad to run over the wood easily without sticking, therefore as little as possible should be used, as it tends to deaden the polish to a certain extent. Where a carving is to be polished after having been varnished, the same process is necessary, but it can only be applied to the plainer portions of the work. Plane surfaces must be made perfectly smooth with glass-paper before polishing, as every scratch or mark will show twice as badly after the operation. When the polish is first rubbed on the wood it is called the "bodying-in;" it will sink into the wood, and not give much glaze. It must, when dry, have another body rubbed on, and a third generally finishes it; but if not, the operations must be repeated. Just before the task is completed greasy smears will show themselves: these will disappear by continuing the gentle rubbing without oiling the pad. You should now be able to see your face in the wood.

DISCURSIVE ARTICLE.

I FEEL myself now free from the practical portion of this little work, and will therefore endeavour to narrate a few interesting facts which have come across me in relation to my profession.

I cannot help commencing this article with a lament that nearly all the magnificent carvings of Grinling Gibbons are in such a deplorable state of decay, both from the ravages of insects and the lapse of time, most of them having been executed in soft wood (lime). I, however, feel it an honour that I have been enabled to arrest this unfortunate state of demolition, in many instances at the request of the noble owners. Having had these works removed to my studio, I have in some cases found them literally falling to pieces, and the interior of the wood reduced to the finest powder. My first object has been the destruction of every trace of insect life, which I have effected with corrosive sublimate and other poisons, and afterwards making good the devastations they have made. There have been several articles in the *Morning Post*, *Builder*, and other papers, giving descriptions of the means of restoration I applied to various works, and I beg to urge all the fortunate possessors of works by the masterly hand of Gibbons to look at once to their condition, and, if necessary, take some steps to prevent their entire

destruction. I shall be happy, for the pleasure of seeing works by our greatest English carver, to give any advice and assistance in my power to lead to their preservation.

I was much interested some time since by seeing a piece of nature's own carving from Australia, that world of wonders. A piece of wood was taken from a great tree fern, the trunk, or rather caudex, of which was about thirteen inches in diameter, and a vase was turned in it before the wood was allowed to dry and shrink, which operations were afterwards allowed to proceed. The result was that after a few weeks a very remarkable curiosity presented itself: the wood had shrunk on the surface to such an extent as to carve itself with elegant lines all over; the depth of the ground, and consequently the projection of the natural enrichment, being about half an inch. I am given to understand that this shrinking process is common to all wooded ferns and palm-trees.

Herne's Oak, so associated with Shakspeare, stood in Windsor Park until 1863, when a heavy gust of wind brought the aged giant down, and I had the honour of carving many objects in the interesting wood for her Majesty the Queen as mementoes. In the same year I visited the ancient dwelling, at Shottery, of Ann Hathaway, afterwards the wife of the poet, and through the kindness of its present owner, Mr. W. Thompson, was allowed to bring away a portion of an apple-tree from the Hathaway orchard, under which probably the two lovers often wandered. Added to these, I used some small pieces of the mulberry-tree which Shakspeare planted in his garden at Stratford-on-Avon. (These latter were surplus pieces of an inkstand carved for Miss Burdett Coutts in this wood.) With these three deeply interesting woods I have carved several small works, such as ring-tazzi, caskets, &c.,

which form most interesting memorials of our great English poet.

A curious account of a carver's house at Bethlehem is given by my sister in her work entitled "Domestic Life in Palestine." She found the carver seated cross-legged on the floor at work. My brother, the consul at Damascus, had given him some English tools, and explained to him the English method of using them; and, with this advantage and his ingenuity, he seems to have executed many excellent works, which he sells to travellers in the Holy Land. I should be very pleased, if my time would allow, to write a description of the way in which wood-carving is carried on in various parts of the world. It would, I believe, prove of much interest and utility, but it would require more time than I could spare from my profession at home.

One of the best specimens of modern carving, in the style of Grinling Gibbons, is to be seen in the decoration of the Church of St. Mary-at-Hill, in the City. It was executed many years ago by my father. The carvings were visited by large numbers of people, and at last inspired a well-known author to write the following poem:—

A Legend of St. Mary-at-Hill.

"In the church of St. Mary-at-Hill, sir, last night,
I was locked by some careless or mischievous wight;
And, after some fruitless attempts to get out,
In the desolate darkness I wandered about.

"In my terror I fancied I met with a host
Of strange-looking goblins, and one tall white ghost;
I sympathized then with the terrible fright
Of poor Goody Two Shoes in similar plight.

"The spectres around me looked fearfully blue,
As I crouched myself down in a carpeted pew;

I listened for sounds that I dreaded to hear,
Till quite overcome with excitement and fear—

I heard
A strange sepulchral tone,
Every word
Was like a groan.

"'Spirits, arise! to-night we must not rest,
Ne silent be; for in our companie
There is a stranger—an *unwilling* guest—
And we must watchen all the night *pardie*.'

SECOND SPIRIT (*a softer voice*).

"'The paly moon has risen in the sky,
And one by one the trembling stars appear,
And night is clothed in robes of mystery;
Certes no living wight should wander here.'

THIRD SPIRIT.

"'Those robes of mystery are mine and yours,
And we may revel in their darkest shades;
But mortal man, while mortal life endures,
Must learn to shun our haunts when daylight fades.'

FOURTH SPIRIT.

"'Our holy church is beautiful to see,
Bedecked with flowers and with garlands fair;
And we will guard and keepen them *pardie*,
That stranger hands ne pluck our treasures rare.

"'St. Mary's lily and the modest rose,
And giant flowers from the new-found world,
And here and there the vine in splendour grows,
And gracefully its tendrils are ycurled.

"'And such a joyful company of flowers
Crowd round the pulpit—all for very love
Of the good Rector—falling round in showers,
And in wild beauty clustering above.

" 'Not so, when Saint à Becket, long ago,
Held the same office! he whose bones at last
Were worshipped by a king, and deck'd, I trow,
In all the priestly splendour of the past.

" 'Hard by the organ, 'midst the birds and flowers
And instruments of music, you may spy
A little crab attracted by the powers
And charmed by the sweets of harmonie.

" 'And here the oak and ivy you may see,
Poppies and tulips their bright blossoms show,
Star after star of wild anemone
In groups of beauty lovingly do grow.

" 'Or rather, seem to grow; for, strange to tell,
These wondrous flow'rs are made of oaken tree,
And deftly carved, ay, marvellously well,
And joyous birds amongen them there be.

" 'The cunnynge carver is a worthy wight,
Yclepped Rogers, "wondrous wise" I ween;
Nature he loves, and art is his delight,
Or such a work as this had never been.

" 'Natheless his tools he oftentimes will quit,
To quote Longinus or some classic lore,
Study philosophy or Holy Writ,
Soldier-historians and bards of yore.'

" And much more they said, but much more than I heard,
For now I could scarcely distinguish a word,
For they spoke altogether, and all in a breath,
And I pretty nearly was tired to death.

" But I found by the words I caught up here and there,
They were talking of our most worshipful mayor,
Of princes and queens, and kings and protectors,
Of bishops and popes, and archbishops and rectors.

"One name in particular seemed to afford
A theme for discussion—'twas 'Archbishop Laud,'
With courts of commission, church robes, and church plate,
And all the affairs of the Church and the State.

"How I fell fast asleep I don't very well know,
But it plainly appears that I must have done so,
For I woke in the morning aroused by the light,
And remembered with wonder the scenes of last night."

Evelyn, in his "Diary," mentions with evident satisfaction his first meeting with this clever artist (Gibbons), who at that period did not rank very high in his profession. He says, "This day I first acquainted his Majesty with that incomparable young man, Gibbons, whom I had lately met with in an obscure place by accident, as I was walking neere a poore solitary thatched house, in a field in our parish, nere Say's Court. I found him shut in; but, looking in at the window, I perceived him carving that large cartoon or crucifix of Tintoret, a copy of which I had myself brought from Venice, where the original picture remaines. I asked if I might enter; he opened the door civilly to me, and I saw him about such a work as for y^{e} curiosity of handling, drawing, and studious exactness I never had before seene in all my travels. I questioned him why he worked in such an obscure and lonesome place. He told me it was that he might apply himself to his profession without interruption, and wondered not a little how I had found him out.

"I asked if he was unwilling to be made known to some great men, for I believed it might turn to his profit. He answered, he was yet but a beginner, but would not be sorry to sell off that piece. On demanding the price, he said £100. In good earnest, the very frame was worth the money,

there being nothing in nature so tender and delicate as the flowers and festoons about it, and yet the work was very strong. In the piece were more than one hundred figures of men, &c. I found he was likewise musical, very civil, sober, and discrete in his discourse. There was only an old woman in the house. So, desiring leave to visit him sometimes, I went away. Of this young man, and the manner of finding him out, I acquainted the king, and begged that he would give me leave to bring him and his work to Whitehall, for that I would adventure my reputation with his Majesty that he had never seen anything approach it, and that he would be exceeding pleased and employ him. The king said he would himself go see him."

From this time it appears that the rise of Gibbons was very rapid. His talents became known, and the great of the land commissioned him to execute the grand works all over England, which gave such a stamp to the century in which he lived.

The Antiquity and History of the Art, and a Description where some of the Finest Specimens of the Art in this Country are to be seen.

To try to determine accurately who was the first sculptor in wood, or at what period he existed, would of course be labour in vain, but I will nevertheless point out to my readers many testimonies proving the great antiquity of the art.

The earliest records I believe we possess of the practice of wood-carving are contained in the Sacred Writings; for instance, the frequent mention of the burning of idols goes

far to prove that they were carved wooden figures. Mention is also made of the "carving and hewing of timber."

In Isaiah xl. 20 we read, "He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image that shall not be moved."

Then, again, the building of Solomon's Temple, 1004 B.C., was superintended by a man sent by Hiram, King of Tyre, who was skilful to work in wood.

Tyre must at that time have been celebrated for the superiority of its artists, for much of the grandeur of the temple at Jerusalem owed its origin to artists of that city. Of this magnificent building we are told that "the cedar of the house was carved with knobs and open flowers; all was cedar, there was no stone seen, and he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved figures of cherubim, and palm-trees, and open flowers, within and without."

To probe the question still farther into the remotest periods would be a task of greater magnitude and of a different character than the one I am now engaged upon, unless we are allowed the following deductions:—

The savages of newly-discovered islands are nearly always found to ornament their clubs, canoes, and paddles with some attempt at decorative wood-carving, often with suitable and very harmonious designs. I therefore think we may with justice conclude that if these men who have never had intercourse with the civilized world have this natural impulse, it must have existed in the hearts of those who were first allowed to tread this fair and beautiful earth.

And we may, from this instance, also deduce that civilization is not required to put into our souls a love of art, but

that civilization only conforms, increases, and refines our appreciation of its beauties.

"The cannibal who tattoes his flesh is a painter. The barbarian who enriches his club with carvings is a sculptor. The Indian who constructs his wigwam in the forest is an architect, and the wild man who sings a triumph over a fallen foe is a musician; and these men have produced, through centuries of refining civilization, such men as Michael Angelo, Raffaelle, Palladio, and Mozart."*

To return to the subject immediately under our consideration, there can be little doubt that the first material on which the efforts of primitive art was employed was wood, it being most easily obtained, and could be fashioned with greater facility than any other substance, and it is more than probable that amongst the first objects carved were figures of large size for worship.

The Egyptians were distinguished by their superiority in sculptural works at a very early period: monuments of their extraordinary skill still remain as proof.

Theophrastus tells us that the doors of the temple of Diana were made of cypress wood, the planks for which had been treasured up for four generations. And Pliny says, on the authority of Mucianus, that "the doors of the temple are of cypress, and, notwithstanding the lapse of nearly four hundred years, they continue as good as new; but it is to be remembered that they were kept for four years in glue. Cypress was chosen in preference to other woods, because, in addition to other advantages, it alone has the property of constantly preserving its beauty and polish." (See Pliny's "Natural History.")

* Robert Folkeston Williams.

The more odoriferous a wood is the more durable it is likely to be. The juniper roof of the temple of Diana, at Sagnalum, in Spain, said to have been founded two hundred years before the destruction of Troy, still continued good and sound in Pliny's time; and the roof of the temple of Diana at Aulis, which was of the same antiquity, was also then perfect.

"Of all woods ebony, cypress, and cedar are thought to be the most durable, a good proof of which is to be seen in the wood of which the temple of Diana was built; it being now four thousand years since it was built, at the joint expense of all Asia; and what is a well-known fact, the roof is wholly composed of planks of cedar. The staircase was of the wood of the vine." Vines were reckoned by the ancients in the class of trees. "No wood is more durable by nature. As to the statue of Diana, there is some doubt as to the wood: all writers say it was ebony, with the exception of Mucianus. He says it was made of the wood of the vine, and that it has never been changed all the seven times the temple has been rebuilt." (Pliny.)

I believe the first carver of whom we have any decided record was Cleeta, an ancient Greek architect and sculptor. He lived and flourished about B.C. 670. He built the Palestia, or large court, near Olympius, used for the horse and chariot races of the celebrated Olympic games, which were held in this place at the close of every Olympiad, that is, every fifth year. It was magnificently decorated with porticoes and other ornaments, and the author was so proud of his performance that he introduced the following inscription under one of the statues he had carved in Athens: "Cleeta, the son of Aristocles, who invented the Palestia of Olympius, did this."

We may now pass over many centuries while art was fluctuating, improving in some parts, receding in others, until we find it receiving a great impetus from the wealthy potentates of the Christian Church during the erection of our magnificent cathedrals. The carver was then entrusted with more powers than he is at present, and hence his progress and improvement; for it is evident, from studying the wood-carvings at our cathedrals, that the architect merely ruled the general outline, and left the detailed decoration and designs to the ingenuity and skill of the carver.

We have sufficient knowledge of the forms of seats and other domestic articles of furniture of the ancients from coins, seals, pictures, and in MSS., to show us the grandeur of style usually employed. The descriptions of ivory thrones of Asia and all the Eastern nations of Europe show us that much luxury in these articles existed. And in the earlier period of this country the walls of the great were wainscoted, and often richly carved.

The invaluable engravings in Shaw's work will be useful in showing the state of the art at various periods of our history. I may mention, for instance, the cradle of Henry V., which is a very interesting specimen of wood-carving: the upright ends which support the cradle are ornamented with foliage, and surmounted by doves.*

Raffaelle did not disdain to design for the sister art, or think he was losing caste by employing his pencil in applying it in the creation of the new style, "the Renaissance," for the services of the wood-sculptor.

* Many of my readers will probably remember the magnificent boxwood cradle executed by my father for Her Majesty, it having been a prominent object in the first Great Exhibition.

Great painters have always had a considerable effect upon the productions of the wood-carvings of their period. Thus, the genius of Raffaelle was instrumental in developing the talents of Von Sheldon, and other artists in wood of that delightful period; and Rubens and Sniders had very probably a similar influence over Grinling Gibbons and his contemporaries.

The next epoch in the progress of wood-carving, more especially in England, was brought about by the genius of

Grinling Gibbons.

The eminent carver in wood and statuary, supposed to have been of Dutch parentage, was born in Spur Alley, in the Strand. He lived afterwards in Belle Sauvage Court, Ludgate Hill, where he carved a pot of flowers which shook surprisingly with the motion of the coaches which passed by. Lord Orford says, "There is no instance of a man before Gibbons who gave to wood the loose and airy lightness of flowers, and chained together the various productions of the elements with a free disorder natural to each species."

He lived afterwards at Deptford, where Mr. Evelyn, discovering his wonderful talents, recommended him to Charles II., who gave him a place in the Board of Works, and employed him in the chapel at Windsor. His carved work here is done in lime-tree, representing a great variety of pelicans, doves, palms, and other allusions to Scripture history, with the star and garter and other ornaments, finished with great perfection. At Windsor, too, he carved the beautiful pedestal in marble for the equestrian statue of the king in the principal court. The fruits, fish, and

implements of shipping are all exquisite. The base of the figure at Charing Cross, and the statue of Charles II. in the Royal Exchange, are also his, and probably the brazen statue of James II., in the privy garden, for there was no other artist of that time capable of it.

Gibbons made a magnificent tomb for Baptist Noel, Viscount Camden, in the church of Exton, Rutlandshire. It cost £1,000; is twenty-two feet high, and fourteen in width. There are two figures, the viscount and his lady, and *bas-relievos* of their children. The same workman performed the wooden throne at Canterbury, which cost £70, and was the donation of Archbishop Tenison. The foliage in the choir of St. Paul's is of his hand.

At Burghley is a noble profusion of his carving, in picture frames, chimney-pieces, and door-cases, and the "Last Supper," in *alto-relievo*, finely executed. At Chatsworth, where a like taste collected ornaments by the most eminent living artists, are many by Gibbons, particularly in the chapel. In the great antechamber are several dead fowl over the chimney finely executed; and over a closet door a pen not distinguishable from real feather. When Gibbons had finished his work at that palace, he presented the duke with a point-lace cravat, a woodcock, and a medal with his own head, all preserved in a glass case in the gallery. In Lord Orford's collection is another point cravat by him, the art of which arrives even to deception, and Herodias with St. John's head—*alto-relievos* in ivory.

In Thoresby's collection was Elijah under the juniper-tree, supported by an angel six inches long and four wide. At Houghton two chimneys are adorned with his foliage. At Mr. Norton's, in Hampshire, was a whole gallery embroidered

in panels by his hand; but the most superb monument of his skill is the large chamber at Petworth, enriched from the ceiling between the pictures with festoons of flowers and dead game, and all in the highest perfection and preservation. Appendant to one is an antique vase with a bas-relief of the purest taste, and worthy the Grecian age of cameos.

At the Earl of Halifax's, at Swanstead, is a chimney-piece adorned with flowers and two beautiful vases. The font of St. James's Church in white marble was also the work of Gibbons. It is supported by the tree of life; the serpent is offering the fruit to our first parents, who stand beneath. On one side of the font is engraven John the Baptist baptizing the Saviour; on another, St. Philip baptizing the eunuch; and on the third, Noah's ark, with the dove bringing the olive branch—the type of peace to mankind. The chancel above the altar is enriched with some beautiful foliage in wood by the same great artist.

In 1714 Gibbons was appointed Master Carver in Wood to George I., with a salary of eighteenpence per diem. He enjoyed the moderate bounty for seven years, and died August 3rd, 1721, at his house in Bow Street, Covent Garden; and, in the November of the following year, his collection, a very considerable one, of pictures, models, &c., was sold by auction. Among other things were two chimney-pieces of his work, the one valued at £100, the other at £120, his own bust in marble by himself, but the wig and cravat extravagant, and an original of Simon the engraver by Sir Peter Lely, which had been much damaged by the fall of Gibbons's house.

Gibbons had a large number of followers or imitators, many Flemings amongst them, some of whom were the producers of very fine works in his style. One of the principal

marks of distinction between the works of Gibbons and his contemporaries is in the manner of treating the ornamental foliage. While Gibbons always threw down the points of his leaves, thus giving a character of repose to the whole of his composition, without detracting from its spirit, the Flemish carvers generally threw them up, and have sometimes strangely contorted them, to the prejudice of the general outline. An experienced eye can immediately perceive the difference between a group of Vandemulen, or his pupils, and those executed by Gibbons.

Mowat, a French sculptor, who worked after Gibbons, and whose freedom of touch, especially in the delineation of flowers, was most remarkable, deserves the character he laboured to attain. The pulpit in St. Paul's was carved by him; and there are some fine works by his hand at Windsor Castle, consisting of panels, friezes, and chimney-pieces.

As an illustration of the decline of the art towards the middle of the eighteenth century, we have to point to Chippendale, a carver and cabinet-maker of the reign of George I., but the most eminent of that day; he attempted to combine the classical, yet natural, style of Gibbons, with the scroll and peculiar turn of the French school of the time of Louis XV., which was an alteration, and a yet lower fall from the style of the former reign.

Chippendale published several folio volumes of designs for carved decoration. Some of Chippendale's best examples are upon the book-cases at the Bodleian Library, and are carved in mahogany, at a time when that wood was costly. Several Flemish artists executed works in this country during the reign of George III., but the whole of that reign exhibits a dead period in the history of the art.

The state-coach of England, however, a fine piece of work, was designed and carved by Joseph Wilton for George III.

At this period Demontreuil was enriching the cabinets of France with his productions. No imitator of nature in any material ever followed her so closely as this artist. He was frequently employed by Marie Antoinette and the French nobility.

He excelled in the representation of small birds and animals; in the former not a feather, and in the latter not a hair, was forgotten. These *bijoux*, the trinkets of the art, are now very scarce, and are much prized.

I keep a record of all the finest carvings in this country, and should feel deeply indebted to any of my readers who would inform me of the existence of rare specimens of the art which they or their friends may possess.

In conclusion, I should recommend the amateur to examine all the remarkable carvings within his reach, that by seeing what has been done he may also see what there is to do, and derive both pleasure and improvement from the study. In London alone there are many works I should advise him to inspect; for instance, those by Gibbons, in St. Paul's Cathedral, St. James's Church, Piccadilly, Allhallow's, and Kensington Palace; and also those by my father, at the churches of St. Mary-at-Hill, Thames Street, and St. Michael's, Cornhill.

I now beg to take my leave, with the best wishes for the success of those to whom I have had the honour of endeavouring to present some

"Practical Hints."

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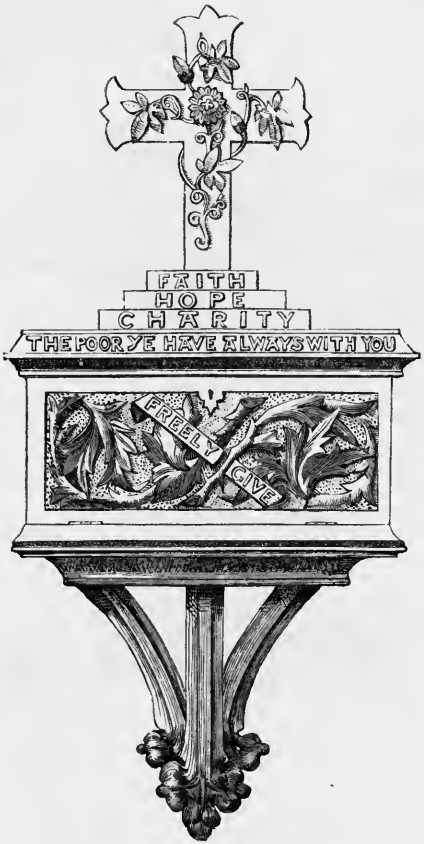
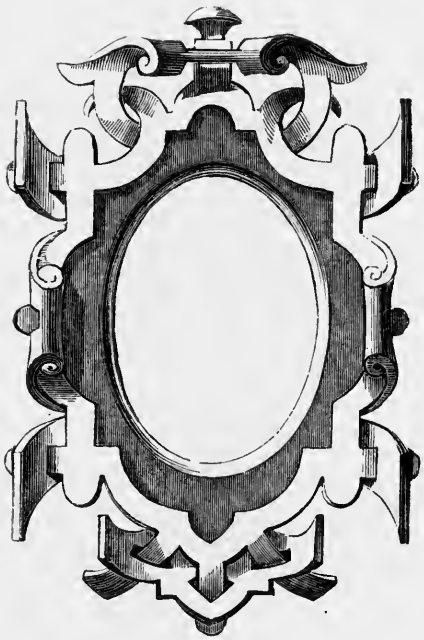


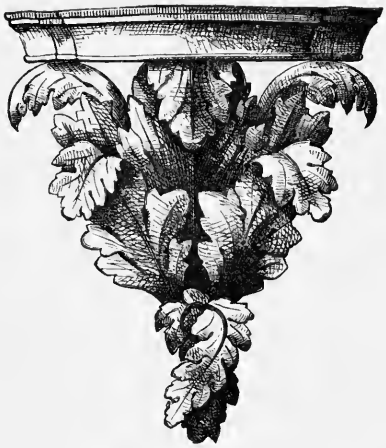
OAKEN ALMS-BOX.

TOILETTE GLASS, IN THE STYLE OF GRINLING GIBBONS.

BRACKET COMPOSED OF BULRUSHES.

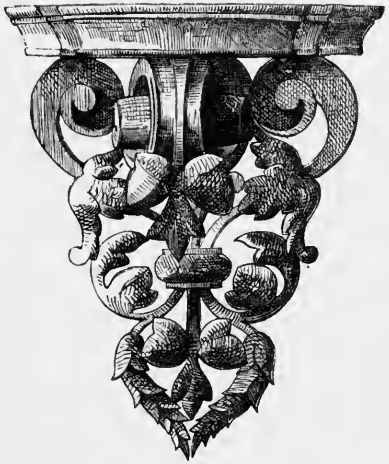


FRAME FOR CARVING IN BOXWOOD. PERIOD OF ELIZABETH.



BRACKET COMPOSED OF ACANTHUS LEAVES.

FRAME FOR MINIATURE, IN THE STYLE OF JAMES I.



BRACKET IN THE ITALIAN STYLE—1500.

MINIATURE FRAME, DESIGNED FROM CARNATIONS.

FRAME COMPOSED OF WHEAT, CORN-FLOWERS, AND POPPIES.

FLORAL FRAME FOR MINIATURE, TO BE CARVED IN BOXWOOD.

DESIGN FOR BRACKET, INTRODUCING A HERON.

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